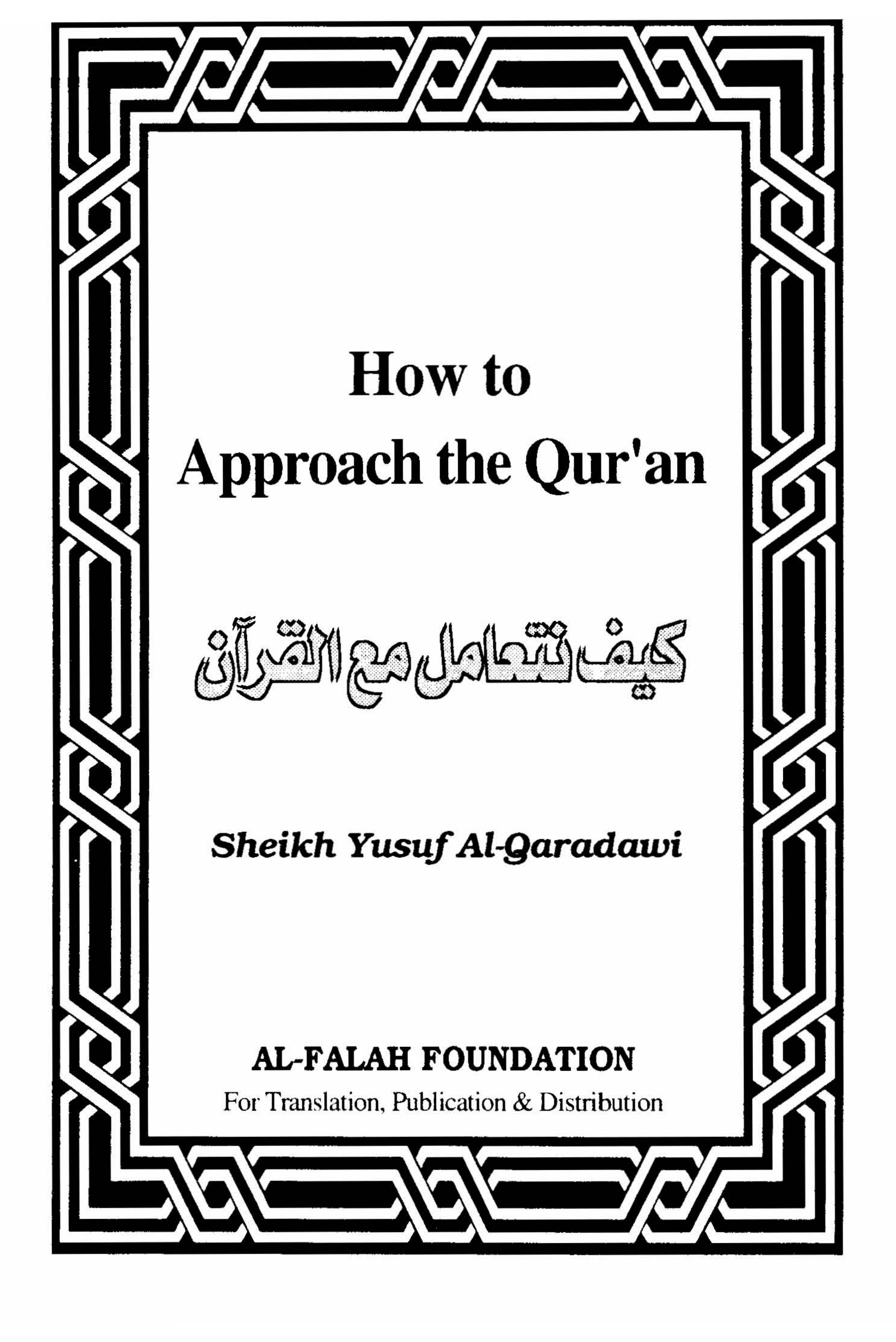
Approach the Qur'an





How to Approach the Qur'an

كيف نتعامل مع القرآن

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi

AL-FALAH FOUNDATION

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Preface

Humanity was re-born when the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (pbuh). This birth was greater than the real birth of humanity. Hence, this spiritual birth has corrected humanity's view towards existence, life, values and methodologies. Also, it has achieved a unique social reality that cannot be imagined.

Human beings could not have reached this reality of purity, beauty, majesty, highness, simplicity, realism, positivity, balance and co-ordination by themselves. For, it is Allah Who wanted them to maintain these qualities through the guidance of the Ever-Glorious Qur'an.

Humanity would be re-born if it dealt better with the Glorious Qur'an; the main reason of their existence and creation. This will be achieved when they recite, comprehend and listen to it attentively and when they apply its laws to their daily life.

We feel indebted to the great Muslim scholar Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi for giving us the opportunity to present this precious book to our English-speaking readers so that they also may benefit from its valuable contents.

Finally, all praise and thanks are due to Allah, without Whose help and guidance nothing can be accomplished.

Al-Falah Director

Muhammad `Abdu



I. Memorizing the Glorious Qur'an

Amongst the various characteristics of the Glorious Qur'an is its being easy to memorize and understand. In this regard, Allah, Most High, says in the Glorious Qur'an,

> ﴿*And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?*﴾
>
> (Al-Qamar: 17)

The words and verses of the Glorious Qur'an are distinguished by fluency, sweetness, and simplicity. Therefore, the person who desires to memorize the Qur'an finds it so easy to do so. By the same token, we see thousands of Muslims, mostly children, memorizing the Glorious Qur'an. No other book, holy or secular, could surpass the Glorious Qur'an in this respect. Christians, for example, do not memorize the Gospels. Their monks and priests, however, do not memorize half or one-forth of, it let alone the common men.

The Merits of Memorizing the Glorious Qur'an

We see many Muslims memorize the Glorious Qur'an although they do not know Arabic. This includes Muslims from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Senegal, and other countries in Asia and Africa. I tested the memorization of some non-Arab Muslims in Qatar and witnessed their accuracy in memorizing the Glorious Qur'an. However, when I asked any of them about his name, no one could reply, as they did not know Arabic.

This is, obviously, the fulfillment of the Divine Promise,

﴿*We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).*﴾

(Al-Hijr: 9)

Allah, Most High, has promised to preserve His book and consequently He prepares those who memorize it through consecutive generations. I memorized the Glorious Qur'an before the age of ten. In Bangladesh, I saw a nine-year-age child who had memorized the Glorious Qur'an. In Egypt, many children memorize the Glorious Qur'an at the age of seven according to the competitions that are held among them in this

regard. One of those children visited Qatar where the minister of Education honored him a few years ago. In Shibin Al-Kum, a village near my village in Egypt, I saw a child of the same age memorize the Glorious Qur'an and recite it in the correct way according to the rules of recitation (*Tajwid*).

Recently, some educationalists criticize the memorization of the Qur'an at an early age without understanding its meaning, claiming that people should not memorize what they do not understand.

However, this contemporary attitude should not be applied to the Glorious Qur'an. There is no harm on the child to memorize the Glorious Qur'an while young and understand it when he becomes older. Memorization at an early age, according to a saying of wise people, is like carving on stones. By Allah's grace, I memorized the Glorious Qur'an in my early childhood and benefited from it in my old age.

As mentioned above, the Glorious Qur'an is distinguished by its simplicity and easiness to be memorized, and so everyone, young or aged, educated or unlettered, can understand it to some extent.

In the *Kuttab*[1], I came to understand the general meaning of the Qur'anic stories and admonitions although I was a mere child. Once, I was reciting *Surat* As-Safat before sheikh Hamid (may Allah have mercy on him), when I read the following Qur'anic verses:

> ﴿*So also was Lut among those sent (by Us). Behold, We delivered him and his adherents, all, except an old woman who was among those who lagged behind. Then We*

1. *Kuttab* is an office that teaches the Glorious Qur'an to children. These kinds of offices are widespread throughout Egypt, particularly in the villages. (Trans.)

destroyed the rest. Verily, ye pass by their (sites), by day and by night: will ye not understand?﴿

(As-Safat: 133-138)

According to the division of the verses in the *Mus-haf*[1], the verse No. 137 ends with ﴾*... ye pass their (sites), by day*﴿ and the verse No. 138 begins with ﴾*... and by night...*﴿ but when I read the two verses I did not stop at the end of the former verse and continued reading until the word "night" in the latter verse. Thereupon, my sheikh said, "May Allah bless you!" That is because he understood that I continued reading until the word "night" to complete the meaning of the sentence ﴾*... ye pass by their (sites), by day and by night...*﴿ although it is known in the science of *Tajwid* that the reader of the Qur'an is recommended to stop at the end of each verse.

Some Christians, furthermore, try to memorize the Glorious Qur'an or at least some parts of it and then teach it to their children. In this connection, we remember Dr. Nazmi Luke, the Christian writer, who spoke about this in the introduction of his "*Muhammad: Ar-Risalah war-Rasul*" (Muhammad: The Mission and the Messenger). In his book, Dr. Nazmi said that his father sent him to a Muslim sheikh in Suez in order to teach him the Glorious Qur'an.

Makram `Ibeid, the well-known Christian politician, memorized many parts of the Glorious Qur'an and used to quote them in his speeches and writings. The Qur'anic words, in fact, added sweetness and strength to his speeches and writings.

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1. *Mus-haf* is the book containing the Ever-Glorious Qur'an.

Memorizing the Glorious Qur'an at an early age has many outstanding benefits, such as maintaining correct pronunciation of and compliance with the grammar of the Arabic language.

Merits of Memorizing the Glorious Qur'an

The Prophet (peace be upon him) highlighted the merits of memorizing the Glorious Qur'an in numerous *hadiths*[1]. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), for instance, reported a *hadith* that reads,

> *"The one who does not memorize some of the Glorious Qur'an is like a desolate house."*[2]

Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to honor and revere the people who had memorized the Glorious Qur'an. In this context, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) sent some of his Companions to some places. He asked each one of them what he had memorized of the Glorious Qur'an. Meanwhile, he asked a young man amongst them, the same question. When the latter said that he memorized such and such *sura*s including *surat* Al-Baqarah, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) exclaimed, "*Have you memorized surat Al-Baqarah!*" "Yes," the man replied. "*Go and you are the leader of the people*," the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) declared. A noble man then said, "By Allah! Nothing prevented me from memorizing *surat* Al-Baqarah except my fear of not abiding by its instructions." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) commented,

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1. *Hadith*: This word refers to any of the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which contain his sayings and practicies. It also refers to the science concerned with these traditions; this is always used with initial capital (*Hadith*). (Trans.)

2. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.

"Learn the Qur'an and recite it. The similitude of the Qur'an and the one who learns and recites it is as a sack filled with musk spreading its fragrance everywhere, and the one who learns it and sleeps (i.e., neither recites nor acts according to its instructions) is like a sack that is filled with musk but tied (to the extent that its fragrance does not reach anyone)."[1]

Those who memorize the Glorious Qur'an are honored and held superior over others by the Prophet (peace be upon him) even after their death. It is known that in the Battle of Uhud (3 AH), the Prophet (peace be upon him) buried those who had memorized the Glorious Qur'an in front of those who had not.

Likewise, it was usual practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to send some persons who had memorized the Glorious Qur'an, from amongst his Companions, to tribes in order to teach them about Islam. Examples of those were the seventy men whom the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) sent to the people of Ril, Dhakwan, `Usiya and Bani Lihyan but the unbelievers betrayed and murdered them at a place called Bi'r Ma`unah.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) as having said,

"On the Day of Judgment, the man who has memorized the Qur'an will come to where the Qur'an will say, 'O Lord! Adorn him.' Therefore, he will be adorned with the crown of Honor. Then the Qur'an will say, 'O Lord! Increase him (in adornment).' Therefore, he will be clothed with the dress of

1. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.

Dignity. Again, the Qur'an will say, 'O Lord! Be pleased with him.' Therefore, Allah will be pleased with him and it will be said to him, 'Read (the Qur'an) and occupy higher degrees.' Each (Qur'anic) verse, moreover, will add a reward for him."[1]

On the Day of Judgment, Allah's reward is not restricted to the people of the Qur'an. Rather, its blessings will be extended to their parents. In this connection, Buraydah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Whoever reads the Qur'an and learns and acts according to it, will be adorned on the Day of Judgment with a crown of Light whose gleam is like that of the sun, and his parents will be dressed in two garments that the world can never be equal to. Thereupon, they will question, 'For what reason are we dressed in these garments?' It will be said, 'This is by virtue of your son who memorized the Qur'an.'"[2]

Parents, in fact, are granted this Divine honor because they play an essential role in guiding their children to memorize the Glorious Qur'an from an early age. These merits are meant to encourage parents to raise their children on memorization of the Glorious Qur'an.

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The most desolate house is that in which there is no (recitation of the) Qur'an."[3]

1. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.
2. Reported by Al-Hakim.
3. Reported by Al-Hakim.

In *At-Targhib wa At-Tarhib*, another narration of the above *hadith* reads, "The smallest house is that in which there is no Qur'an."

The Companions Who Memorized the Glorious Qur'an

Qatadah asked Anas ibn Malik, "Who memorized the Qur'an at the time of the Prophet?" He replied, "Four, all of whom were from the *Ansar*[1]: Ubayy ibn Ka`b, Mu`adh ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thabit and Abu Zayd."[2]

In another narration, Anas said, "When the Prophet died, no one had memorized the Qur'an except four people: Abu Ad-Darda', Mu`adh ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thabit and Abu Zayd."[3]

Apparently, the latter narration differs with the former in two things: (1) It signifies that only four persons amongst the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) completed the memorization of the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and (2) it mentioned Abu Ad-Darda' in the place of Ubayy ibn Ka`b.

Muslim scholars do not accept that only four from amongst the Companions memorized the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), basing their opinion on the view that Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said this according to his own knowledge. Moreover, `Abdullah ibn `Amr said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say,

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1. *Ansari* (pl. *Ansar*) means the people of Madinah who supported and helped the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) and his Companions after the *Hijra*. (Trans.)
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari.
3. Reported by Al-Bukhari.

'Learn the Qur'an from (any of these) four individuals: `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Salim the freed slave of Abu Hudhayfah, Ubayy ibn Ka`b, and Mu`adh ibn Jabal.'"[1]

The above *hadith* refers to the merits of those four Companions but does not confine the number of those who memorized the Qur'an to these four. It is known that there were other Companions who had memorized the Glorious Qur'an such as the seventy men whom the disbelievers treacherously murdered at Bi'r Ma`unah.

Al-Qurtubi commented on the above saying of Anas, explaining, "At the Battle of Yamamah seventy men from amongst the *Qurra'* [2] were murdered and on the day of Bi'r Ma`unah a similar number of the *Qurra'* were murdered. Anas, however, stated the above-mentioned four Companions either because he loved them or because he remembered those four only."

The Hafiz[3] ibn Hajar said that what was referred to by Anas was the people of Al-Khazraj not Al-Aws[4] as ibn Jarir narrated, "Once the two tribes of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj boasted of their own remarkable traits. The people of Al-Aws said, 'From us are a man to him the Throne of the Most Merciful trembled, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, a man whose witness equaled that of two men, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit, a man whom the Angels washed after his death, Hanzalah ibn Abu `Amir, and a man whom the hornets

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari.

2. The Arabic word *Qari'* (pl. *Qurra'*) refers to the person who learns the Glorious Qur'an by heart and recites it in the correct way. (Trans.)

3. Hafiz is a title given to anyone who memorizes one thousand *hadith*s and upward.

4. Al-Khazraj and Al-Aws were the two main tribes that inhabited Madinah before the advent of Islam. After the *Hijra* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Madinah, these tribes intermingled with the coming Muslims from Makkah. (Trans.)

defended, `Asim ibn Abi Thabit.' Thereupon, the people of Al-Khazraj said, 'From us are four men who, when the Prophet died, none had memorized the Qur'an except for them: Abu Ad-Darda', Mu`adh ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thabit, and Abu Zayd.'"[1]

The Hafiz As-Suyuti, furthermore, referred to a woman - Umm Waraqah bint `Abdullah ibn Al-Harith - who memorized the Glorious Qur'an. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to visit her, called her the martyr, and bade her to lead her family in Prayer. She had a special muezzin. During the reign of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, she was killed and fell a martyr at the hands of both her maid-servant and boy-servant. Then, `Umar commented on her martyrdom, saying, "Surely, the Messenger of Allah told the truth." And, he used to say to his Companions, "Let us visit the (female) martyr."

Ibn Hajar confirmed that Abu Bakr, according to some *hadiths*, learned the Glorious Qur'an by heart in the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). It is reported in the *Sahih*, for example, that Abu Bakr built a mosque in the courtyard of his house wherein he used to recite the Glorious Qur'an. This is assured by the fact that Abu Bakr accompanied the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to the extent that `A'ishah said that her father, Abu Bakr, used to visit them in the morning and the evening. In this context, we may recall the *hadith* that reads, "*Let him who is more versed in the Book of Allah lead the people in Prayer.*"[2] It is known, according to the books of *Sirah* (the Prophet's biography), that Abu Bakr was appointed by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to lead the people in Prayer during the Prophet's period of illness.

1. As-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan*, vol. 1, pp. 199-201.
2. Reported by Muslim.

Accordingly, Abu Bakr was more versed in the Book of Allah than anybody else, to the extent that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) appointed him to lead the people in Prayer.

As-Suyuti said that Ibn Kathir has confirmed this trait of Abu Bakr before Ibn Hajar.[1]

Ibn Abu Dawud reported on the authority of Muhammad ibn Ka`b Al-Qirzi that in the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) five men from the *Ansar* had memorized the Glorious Qur'an: Mu`adh ibn Jabal, `Ubadah ibn As-Samit, Ubayy ibn Ka`b, Abu Ad-Darda', and Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari. Here, `Ubadah and Abu Ayyub were added to the aforementioned four in the narration of Anas.

In his *Al-Qira'at*, Abu `Ubayd mentioned the *Qurra'* from amongst the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). From the *Muhajirun*[2], he stated: The four Rightly-guided Caliphs, Talhah, Sa`d, ibn Mas`ud, Hudhayfah, Salim, Abu Hurayrah, `Abdullah ibn As-Sa'ib, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah ibn `Umar, `Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr, `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As, `A'ishah, Hafsah, and Umm Salamah. Also, he stated from the *Ansar*: `Ubadah ibn As-Samit, Mu`adh who was called Abu Halimah, Majma` ibn Jariyah, Fudalah ibn `Ubayd, and Maslamah ibn Mikhlad. Abu `Ubayd, however, disclosed the fact that some of them completed the memorization of the Glorious Qur'an after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

As-Suyuti said, "Abu Dawud stated that amongst the Companions who had memorized the Glorious Qur'an were Tamim

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1. As-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan*, vol. 1, p. 201.
2. *Muhajirun*, as an Islamic term, refers to the persons who migrated with the Prophet (pbuh) from Makkah to Madinah. (Trans.)

Ad-Dari and `Uqbah ibn `Amir. According to Abu `Amr Ad-Dani, Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari memorized the Glorious Qur'an also."[1]

No doubt, the number of the Companions who memorized the Glorious Qur'an is not equal to the number of those who memorize it today, for the Companions used to learn and apply the Qur'an in their lives besides memorizing it. In this connection, ibn `Umar said, "We used to revere the man who memorizes *surat* Al-Baqarah and *surat* Al `Imran." When `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) completed the memorization of *surat* Al-Baqarah, he sacrificed a camel to Allah expressing his gratitude to Him, Most High.

At our early age, we used to call *surat* Al-Baqarah *Al-Khatmah As-Sughra* (the minor end of the Qur'an) and the whole Qur'an *Al-Khatmah Al-Kubra* (the major end of the Qur'an).

It is no wonder that *surat* Al-Baqarah enjoys these great merits. In this context, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Don't turn your houses graves. Verily, devils do not enter a house wherein Surat Al-Baqarah is recited."*[2]

Abu Umamah Al-Bahli (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say,

> *'Recite surat Al-Baqarah, for to take recourse to it is a blessing and to give it up is a cause of grief, and the magicians cannot confront it.'"*[3]

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1. As-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan*, vol. 1, pp. 202-202.
2. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.
3. Reported by Muslim.

Ibn Mas`ud said, "This Qur'an is the banquet of Allah. So, whoever could learn anything from it, should do so. The most desolate house is that in which there is no (recitation of the) Qur'an... Satan goes out from the house in which *surat* Al-Baqarah is recited."[1] Once more, he said, "Everything has a hump; and the hump of the Qur'an is *surat* Al-Baqarah."[2]

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1. Reported by At-Tabarani.
2. Reported by Al-Hakim.

The Ethics of the People of the Qur'an

The people of the Qur'an, who learn it by heart, should abide by certain ethics and shoulder specific duties in order to deserve the description of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he said, *"Surely, Allah has beloved servants amongst people?"* People asked, "Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?" *"The people of the Qur'an"*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied adding, *"They are the beloved and favorite servants of Allah."*[1] Following, however, are some of the ethics that the people of the Qur'an should firmly adhere to:

1- Frequent Reading and Listening to the Qur'an

The one who learns the Qur'an by heart should frequently read and listen to it so that he can retain it in his heart. In this context, ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"The example of the person who knows the Qur'an by heart is like the owner of tied camels. If he keeps them tied, he will control them, but if he releases them, they will run away."*[2]

1. Reported by Ahmad and An-Nasa'i.
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

In the narration of Muslim, however, it is added,

"If the one who learns the Qur'an by heart awakens to read the Qur'an by day and night, he will remember it; whereas if he does not awaken (to recite it), he will forget it."

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"It is a bad thing that some of you say, 'I have forgotten such-and-such verse of the Qur'an,' for indeed, he has been caused (by Allah) to forget it. So you must keep on reciting the Qur'an because it escapes from the hearts of men faster than camels that are released from their lead ropes."[1]

According to the above *hadith*, Allah, Most High, may cause a person to forget some of what he memorizes because of committing sins.

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Keep on reciting the Qur'an, for by Him in Whose Hand my life is, the Qur'an runs away (is forgotten) faster than camels that are released from their lead ropes."[2]

The one who memorizes the Glorious Qur'an should make the *Mus-haf* his companion in loneliness and his close friend in times of alienation in order to retain it. In this connection, Al-Qasim ibn `Abdur-Rahman said, "I asked a devout man, 'Do you not have a close friend (in this wilderness)?' Whereupon, he replied, 'This is my close friend,' pointing to a *Mus-haf*."

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1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Explaining the Islamic ruling regarding forgetting the Glorious Qur'an, As-Suyuti pointed out that forgetting the Glorious Qur'an after memorizing it is a major sin. To support his point of view, As-Suyuti quoted the following *hadith*s:

> *"The faults of my people are shown to me. Yet, I do not see a more grievous fault than that of a man who memorizes a surah or an ayah of the Glorious Qur'an and then forgets it."*[1]

> *"Whoever recites (memorizes) the Qur'an and then forgets it, will meet Allah on the Day of Judgment as a leper."*[2]

Also, he quoted the aforementioned two *hadith*s narrated by `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (may Allah be pleased with them both).

In fact, the *hadith*s which indicate that forgetting what one memorizes of the Glorious Qur'an is a major sin are proven to be *da`if* (weak), i.e., unauthentic, according to the sayings of the scholars of *Hadith*. Therefore, we can say that forgetting the Glorious Qur'an after memorizing it is condemned and disliked, not prohibited or regarded as a major sin by the *Shari`ah*[3].

I fear that people would refrain from memorizing the Glorious Qur'an owing to the grievous sin they would commit in case of forgetting it. So, I admitted that forgetting the Qur'an after memorizing it is disliked, not prohibited.

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1. Reported by Abu Dawud.
2. Reported by Abu Dawud.
3. *Shari`ah* is the Islamic Law, which contains all ordinances that Allah, Most High, has prescribed for Muslims.

2- Compliance with the Morals of the Qur'an

Whoever memorizes the Glorious Qur'an, should be distinguished by the morals of the Qur'an and follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about whom `A'ishah, Mother of the Believers, said, "The morals of the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) are exactly that of the Qur'an."(1)

People of the Qur'an should be like a mirror wherein people see the values and morals of the Glorious Qur'an reflected. Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The one who learns the Qur'an by heart should be distinguished by his prayer and recitation at night while people sleep, his (earnest) work while people laugh, his silence while people indulge (in nonsense), and his consciousness (of Allah) while people are conceited. One who memorizes the Qur'an, moreover, should be humble and tender-hearted. He should not be hard-hearted, disputant, vociferous, or harsh."

He, also, denied the character of some people, saying, "The Qur'an has been revealed in order to be put into practice. Some people, unfortunately, concern themselves only with studying it, to the extent that one of them may recite the whole Qur'an without leaving out any letter while neglecting to work according to it."

Al-Fudayl ibn `Iyad, the well-known ascetic, said, "People of the Qur'an are the bearers of the banner of Islam. Therefore, they should not indulge in amusement, nonsense, or play like other common people do. as a manifestation of their consideration of

1. Reported by Muslim.

the rights of the Qur'an." Furthermore, he, added, "People of the Qur'an should not long for seeking others' favors, be the rulers' or the public's. On the contrary, people should look forward to their favors."

An early Muslim was reported to have said, "A servant of Allah may recite a *surah* of the Qur'an whereupon the angels pray for him from the beginning until the end of the *surah*; whereas another servant may recite a *surah* of the Qur'an whereupon the angels invoke Allah's curses upon him." Then, he was asked, "How is that?" Thereupon, he disclosed, "If a servant of Allah abides by the commands and prohibitions of the *surah* (which he recites), angels will pray for him; otherwise, they will invoke Allah's curses upon him."

Some scholars, likewise, said, "A person may invoke Allah's curses upon himself while reading the Glorious Qur'an. That happens, for instance, when one reads Qur'anic verses like: ﴿*Behold the curse of Allah is on those who do wrong!*﴾ (Hud: 18) and ﴿*Invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie.*﴾ (Al `Imran: 61) whereas he himself does wrong and tells lies."

This is in accordance with the saying of Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that reads, "A person may read the Qur'an, while the Qur'an invokes Allah's curses upon him."

Maysarah said, "It is a strange thing that the Qur'an be in the heart of a wicked man."

Other scholars said, "If a son of Adam reads the Qur'an, then commits faults, and then reads it once more, it would be said to him, 'What do you want from My Words as long as you ignore Me.'"

It is no surprise to see the people of the Qur'an precede others in virtue. Thus, you see them in the first rows in Prayer, in the first lines of men in *Jihad* [1], and in front of others in doing good. In battles, people used to call upon the people of the Qur'an, saying, "O people of *surat* Al-Baqarah, today sorcery will be nullified." That happened, for example, in the well-known battle of Al-Yamamah. In that battle, Hudhayfah said, "O people of the Qur'an! Adorn the Qur'an with practice." Also, Salim, the slave of Abu Huzayfah, said on that day when the *Muhajirun* expressed to him their fear that they may be defeated because of him, "I would be a wicked man to be the reason you were defeated while I have learned the Qur'an by heart."[2] On the day of Al-Yamamah, a great number of those who memorized the Qur'an were martyred[3] for they were in front of others in fighting.

The Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to memorize the Glorious Qur'an in a way that led them to act according to its rules and morals. In his *Al-Bayan*, Abu `Amr Ad-Dani reported on the authority of `Uthman, Ibn Mas`ud, and Ubayy (may Allah be pleased with them all) that the Messenger of Allah used to teach them ten verses of the Qur'an and not to continue on to the next ten until they had translated their teachings into practice. "In this way he taught us both the Qur'an and action," the Companions commented.

`Abdur-Raziq, likewise, in his *Musannaf* reported on the authority of Abu `Abdur-Rahman As-Salami who said, "We

1. *Jihad* means fighting is the cause of Allah or any kind of effort to make Allah's word Supperior, which is regarded as one of the principles of Islam. (Translator).
2. Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayyah wan Nihayyah*, vol. 6, p. 324, Beirut.
3. It is said that on the day of Al-Yamamah 500 men of those who memorized the Qur'an were martyred.

used to learn ten verses of the Qur'an and not to continue on to the next ten until we had gotten ourselves well-acquainted with its rules, as well as its commands and prohibitions."

In his *Muwatta'*, Imam Malik narrated that it took `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) ten years to learn *surat* Al-Baqarah.

Apparently, that great Companion, ibn `Umar, took so long to learn this *surah* so as to abide by it and to learn its rules and instructions.

In this connection, ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "For us, memorizing the Qur'an is so difficult while acting according to it is so easy. For our successors, this matter will be on the contrary."

Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "In this *Ummah*[1], the early generation of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to memorize a little of the Qur'an but they were gifted with acting according to it. Yet, the later generations of this *Ummah* will read the Glorious Qur'an but they will not be gifted with action."

Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Acquire all the knowledge you want but bear in mind that Allah will not reward you until you apply what you know."[2]

3- Sincerity in Memorizing the Qur'an

People of the Qur'an must seek the pleasure of Allah with memorizing the Glorious Book, the Qur'an. In the Glorious

1. This word refers to the Muslim nations all over the world as one entity.
2. All these sayings and comments are stated by Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir*, vol. 1, pp. 34-35.

Qur'an, Allah, Most High, says,

﴾*Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him.*﴿

(An-Nisa': 36)

﴾*Whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.*﴿

(Al-Kahf: 110)

In this context, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say,

'The first of people against whom judgment will be pronounced on the Day of Judgment will be a man who had died a martyr. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His Favors and he will recognize them. (The Almighty) will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I fought for You until I died a martyr. He will say: You have lied - you only fought so that it might be said (of you): He is courageous. And so it was said. Then, he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. (Another) will be a man who had studied (religious) knowledge and had taught it and who used to recite the Qur'an. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His Favors and he will recognize them. (The Almighty) will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I studied (religious) knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Qur'an for Your sake. He will say: You have lied - you only studied (religious) knowledge so that it might be said (of you): He is learned. And you recited the Qur'an

that it might be said (of you): He is a reciter. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. (The other) will be a man whom Allah had made rich and to whom He had given all kinds of wealth. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His Favors and he will recognize them. (The Almighty) will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I have left no path in which You like money to be spent without spending in it for Your sake. He will say: You have lied - you did but do so that it might be said (of you): He is generous. And so it was said. Then he will be ordered to be dragged on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire."[1]

Another *hadith* reads,

"Whoever seeks knowledge for someone's sake other than Allah, should anticipate his dwelling-place in the Hell-fire."[2]

Moreover, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Whoever seeks knowledge, which should be dedicated to Allah's sake, but beseeches a worldly gain through it, will never smell the fragrance of Paradise."[3]

Also, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Seek refuge in Allah from Gubb Al-Hazan." The people said, "O Messenger of Allah! What is Gubb Al-Hazan?"

1. Reported by Muslim.
2. Reported by ibn Majah.
3. Reported by At-Tirmidhi and ibn Majah.

He replied, *"A valley in Hell-fire from which Hell-fire, itself, seeks refuge in Allah a hundred times everyday."* Then, they asked, "Who will enter it, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, *"Readers of the Qur'an who show off by their deeds."*[1]

Whoever memorizes the Glorious Qur'an and seeks knowledge, should be conscious of his intention and dedicate his work to Allah, Most High. People of the Qur'an are required to be more sincere in their practices than others as they get more rewards than others do.

Sufyan ibn `Uyaynah said, "I know that ibn `Abbas said, 'Should the people of the Qur'an carry out its rights, Allah will love them. Yet, they may seek the world through it, and so Allah would dislike them and people would disregard them.'"

Abu Ja`far ibn `Ali is reported to have commented on the Qur'anic verse that reads, ﴿*Then they will be thrown headlong into the (Fire), they and those straying in Evil,*﴾ saying, "The verse refers to some people who describe truth and justice in their speech while their actions are the contrary."

Intellectual and Devotional Duties of the People of the Qur'an

In his well-known *Tafsir*, Al-Qurutbi said: The People of the Qur'an should dedicate their endeavors for the sake of Allah and be consistent in reading the Glorious Qur'an by night and day, in Prayer and in other conditions so that they may never forget it.

In this context, ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

1. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.

"The example of the person who learns the Qur'an by heart is like the owner of tied camels. If he keeps them tied, he will control them, but if he releases them, they will run away."[1]

In the narration of Muslim, however, it is added,

"If the one who learns the Qur'an by heart awakens to read the Qur'an by day and night, he will remember it; whereas if he does not awaken (to recite it), he will forget it."

The person who memorizes the Glorious Qur'an should be deeply grateful to Allah and always remember Him. He should put his trust in Him and seek help and protection from his Lord, Allah. He should, furthermore, bear in mind the inevitability of death and prepare himself for it.

People of the Qur'an should be afraid of committing sins, long for the forgiveness of their Lord, and think good of Him.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"None of you should court death except hoping good from Allah."[2]

They should get themselves well-acquainted with the people of their time and be aware of their rulers. They should concern themselves with salvation and exert themselves to the utmost to attain it. Consciousness of Allah and adherence to His commands and prohibitions should be their distinctive characteristics.

Here, we may recall the saying of ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him), "The one who learns the Qur'an by heart should be distinguished by his (Prayer and recitation at) night

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

2. Reported by Muslim.

while people sleep, his (earnest) work while people laugh, his silence while people indulge (in nonsense), and his consciousness (of Allah) while people are conceited."

People of the Qur'an should steer clear of doubtful matters, and be tolerant, forbearing, and sober-minded. They should be humble and avoid pride, conceit, and useless argumentation. Furthermore, they should not wrong others. They should offer men their favors, and accompany righteous people who will help them do good.

It is the duty of the people of the Qur'an to get themselves well-acquainted with the rules, teachings, and meanings of the Qur'an so as to act accordingly. They should distinguish the Makki revelation from the Madani[1] revelation in order to know what was revealed in the beginning of Islam and what was revealed later, and to know the *Nasikh* (later revelation that abrogated earlier Qur'anic verses) and the *Mansukh* (the verses that were abrogated) in the Qur'an.

Teaching the Glorious Qur'an

`Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."*[2]

In his *Al-Burhan*, Az-Zarkashi said, "Teaching the Qur'an is a communal duty. Likewise, memorizing the Qur'an is an

1. Makki revelation means the Qur'anic verses that were revealed in Makkah while the Madani revelation means the verses that were revealed in Madinah. The majority of scholars hold the opinion that the Makki revelation refers to what was revealed before the *Hijra* of the Prophet Muhammad to Madinah while the Madani revelation refers to what was revealed after the *Hijra*. (Trans.)

2. Reported by Al-Bukhari.

obligation upon the *Ummah*. That means, according to Al-Juwayni, if a sufficient number of people shoulder the task of teaching the Qur'an, the rest of the people will be excused; otherwise, the whole community will be held sinful. Accordingly, if there is no one in a city or a village that can recite the Qur'an, all the inhabitants of that city or village will be held sinful."[1]

But, the question which arises now is what is meant by learning and teaching the Qur'an? Is it merely to learn the Glorious Qur'an by heart?

Some people confine the meaning of learning and teaching the Qur'an to this limited sense. This is the reason behind awarding those who memorize the Qur'an with great financial gifts.

However, I do not agree with this stance since it gives priority to memorization over understanding. I have dealt with this point thoroughly in my *Fiqh Al-Awlawiyyat* (Understanding of Priorities). According to the Glorious Qur'an, one of the Prophet's salient roles is to instruct his people in the Book and Wisdom. This role is mentioned in four places in the Glorious Qur'an. For instance, Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴿*Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error.*﴾

(Al `Imran: 164)

1. Az-Zarkashi, *Al-Burhan*, vol. 1, p. 456.

No doubt, instructing the Book does not mean only recitation or memorization. In some *hadith*s, learning as well as teaching the Glorious Qur'an is called "study". Abu Hurayrah, for example, narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"No people assemble in a house among the houses of Allah (mosques) and recite the Book of Allah and study it (among themselves), but there would descend upon them tranquillity; mercy would cover them; and the angels would surround them and Allah makes mention of them in the presence of those who are near Him."*[1]

Studying the Glorious Qur'an signifies learning its rules of recitation, knowing its teachings, and drawing attention to its admonitions. That is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do with the Archangel Gabriel in the month of Ramadan during his lifetime. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "The Prophet was the most generous amongst the people, and he used to be more so in the month of Ramadan when Gabriel visited him, and Gabriel used to meet with him on every night of Ramadan until the end of the month. The Prophet used to recite the Glorious Qur'an to Gabriel, and when Gabriel met him, he used to be more generous than a fast wind (which causes rain and welfare)."[2]

It is not sufficient, therefore, to learn the Glorious Qur'an by heart without knowing its meaning, even though one will be rewarded by Allah, Most High, for memorizing His Book. In this context, we may recall the following *hadith* narrated by `Uqbah ibn `Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) who said,

1. Reported by Muslim.
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari.

"Once we were in Suffa when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came out and said, *'Which of you would like to go out every morning to But-han (a place near Madinah) or Al-`Aqiq (a valley near Madinah) and bring two large she-camels without being guilty of sin or without severing the ties of kinship?'* We said, 'Messenger of Allah, we would like to do it.' Upon this he said, *'Does not one of you go out in the morning to the mosque and teach or recite two verses from the Book of Allah, the Majestic and Glorious? That is better for him than two she-camels, and three verses are better than three (she-camels), and four verses are better for him than four (she-camels), and so on.'"*[1]

I think what is meant by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the above *hadith* is not merely learning the Qur'nic verses by heart. Rather, it means learning and acting according to them. Learning the Glorious Qur'an as well as acting according to its instructions was a characteristic of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). By doing so, the Glorious Qur'an will be a light and a proof in favor of man on the Day of Judgment. Abu Umamah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Whoever memorizes a verse of the Book of Allah will be faced by it on the Day of Judgment while it is smiling."[2]

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1. Reported by Muslim.
2. According to Al-Haythami in *Az-Zwa'id*, vol. 7, p. 161, this *hadith* is reported by At-Tabarani.

Receiving Payment for Teaching the Qur'an

Muslim scholars hold different opinions regarding the permissibility of receiving payment for teaching the Glorious Qur'an. A group of scholars are of the opinion that it is permissible to receive payment for teaching the Glorious Qur'an. The proponents of this view quote the following narration of ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) in support of their opinion,

"You are most entitled to take wages for (performing a Ruqya[1] with) Allah's Book."[2]

It is said that one can receive payment for teaching the Qur'an in case it is not his duty to do so. This opinion has been maintained by Al-Halimi.

In his *Al-Bustan* (the Garden), Abu Al-Layth stated that teaching is of three kinds: (1) teaching in anticipation of Allah's reward without receiving payment, (2) teaching in lieu of a certain payment, and (3) teaching without any condition in which case if the teacher is offered any gift he can accept it.

The first will be rewarded by Allah, for it is the mission of the Prophets. As to the second kind, there are different opinions. Early scholars, on the one hand, were of the opinion that it is not permissible to receive payment for teaching, since the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Inform about me even if it is only one verse."[3]

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1. *Ruqyah* (pl. *ruqa*): It means the recitation of some Qur'anic verses as a treatment for a disease. (Trans.)
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari.
3. Reported by Al-Bukhari.

A group of late scholars, on the other hand, have stated that it is permissible. They have added that it is preferable not to fix a certain payment for teaching the Qur'an or writing. However, in the case of fixing a certain payment for teaching the Qur'an, I prefer the opinion that there will be no wrongdone because Muslims are in need of doing so.

Regarding the third kind, scholars unanimously agree that it is permissible because the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a teacher for all people and he used to accept gifts. In this context, we may recall the incident when some Companions of the Prophet went on a journey until they reached a tribe whose people refused to treat them as their guests. The chief of that tribe was then bitten by a snake and they tried their best to cure him but in vain. They asked those Companions if they had anything useful. One of the Companions accepted to recite a *Ruqyah* for the patient on condition that they fix some wages for it. They agreed to pay them a flock of sheep. After reciting *surat* Al-Fatihah as a *Ruqyah* for the patient, he became well. They paid them what they had agreed to pay. The Companions went to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) and narrated the story. Allah's Messenger said, "You have done the right thing. Divide (what you have earned) and assign a share for me as well." The Prophet smiled thereupon.(1)

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made teaching the Qur'an a dowry for a woman, as Sahl ibn Sa`d narrated that a lady came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and declared that she had decided to offer herself to Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet said, "*I am not in need of women.*" A man said (to the Prophet), "Please marry her to me." The Prophet said (to him),

1. Reported by Ibn `Abbas.

"*Give her a garment.*" The man said, "I cannot afford it." The Prophet said, "*Give her anything, even if it be an iron ring.*" The man apologized again. The Prophet then asked him, "*What have you memorized of the Qur'an?*" He replied, "I memorize such-and-such portion of the Qur'an." The Prophet said, "*Then I marry her to you for that much of the Qur'an which you learn by heart.*"(1)

We should keep in mind, however, that what is mentioned above is pertinent to receiving payment for teaching the Glorious Qur'an which is not permissible for reciting it. Reciting the Glorious Qur'an is an act of worship that the worshiper cannot receive payment for. Worship should be dedicated to Allah alone, the Only One Who rewards for it. In this connection, `Abdur-Rahman ibn Shibl reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Recite the Qur'an; act according to it; do not abandon it; do not be excessive regarding it; do not earn livelihood by means of it; and do not seek increase (in wealth) through it."*(2)

`Umran ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Recite the Qur'an and ask (the favor of) Allah by it before the coming of some people who recite the Qur'an to ask (the favor of) people by it."*(3)

Nevertheless, if the person who recites the Qur'an is given something as a gift or alms, he is permitted to accept it.

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1. Agreed upon *hadith*.
2. Reported by Ahmad, At-Tabarani, and Al-Bayhaqi.
3. Reported by Ahmad, At-Tabarani, and Al-Bayhaqi.

II. Reciting and Listening to the Glorious Qur'an

Allah, Most High, has revealed His Eternal Book to be recited, listened to, and reflected upon. In the Glorious Qur'an, hearts find calmness and peace. Muslim scholars define the Glorious Qur'an as the Book whose recitation is an act of worship in itself. In the Encyclopedia Britannica, it is stated under the title "Muhammad" that the number of readers of the Qur'an surpasses the number of any other readers of other books all over the world.

The Merits of Reciting the Glorious Qur'an

The merits of reciting the Glorious Qur'an are mentioned in both the Glorious Qur'an and the Purified *Sunnah*. In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah, Most High, says,

﴾*Those who rehearse the Book of Allah, establish regular Prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for commerce that will never fail: For He will pay them their meed, nay, He will give them (even) more out of His Bounty: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).*﴿

(Fatir: 29-30)

The Glorious Qur'an, moreover, praises a group of the People of the Book, saying,

﴾*Of the People of the Book are a portion that stand (for the right); they rehearse the Signs (verses) of Allah all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration.*﴿

(Al `Imran: 113)

The *Sunnah*, likewise, highlights the merits of reciting the Glorious Qur'an in more than one *hadith*. Following are some examples:

`A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Whoever recites the Qur'an and masters it by heart, will be with the noble righteous scribes (in Heaven). And, whoever exerts himself to learn the Qur'an by heart, and recites it with great difficulty, will have a double reward."[1]

Apparently, the person who recites the Glorious Qur'an with great difficulty will be rewarded twice as much as the person who reads it with ease as the former bears the burdens of reading while he is not well-versed in reciting the Qur'an, which is a sign of his determination to read the Book of Allah, Most High.

Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say,

'Read the Qur'an, for it will intercede on behalf of its readers on the Day of Judgment.'"[2]

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Whoever reads a single letter of the Book of Allah, will be rewarded (as he has done a good deed) and his reward will be multiplied tenfold..."[3]

Abu Sa`id (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Allah, Most High, says, 'Whoever concerns himself with reading the Qur'an more than asking Me, will be responded

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Reported by Muslim.
3. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.

to by Me better than those who continually ask Me. The superiority of the Words of Allah over other words is like the superiority of Allah over His creation."[1]

\`Abdullah ibn \`Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> *"On the Day of Judgment, both Fasting and the Qur'an will intercede on behalf of the servant (of Allah): Fasting will say, 'O Allah! I prevented him from food and drink, so let me intercede on behalf of him; while the Qur'an will say, 'I prevented him from sleep during the night, so let me intercede on behalf of him.'"* He (the Prophet) added, *"Their intercession will be accepted (by Allah)."*[2]

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> *"There is no envy except in two: one who, having been given (knowledge of) the Qur'an by Allah, recites it during the night and day (and also acts upon it)... and a person, having been given wealth by Allah, spends it in the right way."*[3]

"Envy" in the *hadith* means wishing to have the like of what another has, without the desire of any evil to the one he envies. This kind of envy is passable, which is contrary to the other abhorred kind, which includes the desire of evil to others.

Reciting the Glorious Qur'an, moreover, has an influence on the hypocrites. In this connection, Abu Musa Al-Ash\`ari reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said,

1. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.
2. Reported by Ahmad.
3. Reported by Al-Bukhari.

"The example of a believer who recites the Qur'an, is that of a citron which smells good and tastes good; and the example of a believer who does not recite the Qur'an, is that of a date which has no smell but tastes sweet; and the example of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'an, is that of an aromatic plant which smells good but tastes bitter; and the example of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'an, is that of a colocynth plant which has no smell and is bitter in taste."[1]

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The house, in which the Qur'an is recited, will seem spacious, contain abundant provision, be visited by angels, and be abandoned by devils. In contrast, the house, in which the Qur'an is not recited, will seem limited, contain scant provision, be abandoned by angels, and be visited by devils."[2]

`Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"(On the Day of Judgment,) it will be said to the reciter of the Qur'an, 'Read (the Qur'an) and occupy higher degrees. Recite (the Qur'an) as you used to recite it in the world, for your position will be at the end of the last Qur'anic verse you read.'"[3]

The Book of Allah, the Glorious Qur'an, has a positive influence on the hearts of people; an influence which is admitted even by the unbelievers. The unbelievers used to command each

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*.
3. Reported by Abu Dawud.

other not to listen to the Qur'an fearing that it might influence them to embrace Islam. The Glorious Qur'an refers to this fact, saying,

> ﴿*The unbelievers say: Listen not to this Qur'an, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that ye may gain the upper hand.*﴾

(Fussilat: 26)

In the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), some unbelievers used to hide and listen to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was reciting the Glorious Qur'an. Once, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah listened to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while the latter was reciting the following Qur'anic verse:

> ﴿*Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.*﴾

(An-Nahl: 90)

Thereupon, Al-Mughirah asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to read the same Qur'anic verse once more. On hearing the recitation of that verse again, Al-Mughirah commented, "By Allah! This (speech) has sweetness, is covered with elegance... and it is not the saying of a human being."[1]

On hearing the Glorious Qur'an, the jinn[2] said, as the Qur'an states,

> ﴿*We have really heard a wonderful Recital! It gives guidance to the Right, and we have believed therein: We*

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1. Reported by Al-Bayhaqi in *Ash-Shu`ab* on the authority of ibn `Abbas.
2. In Islam, this word (Jinn) means a spirit that is capable of assuming human or animal form and exercising supernatural influnce over people.

shall not join (in worship) any (gods) with our Lord. ﴿

(Al-Jinn: 1-2)

Lately, Dr. Ahmad Al-Qadi and some Muslim physicians conducted some experiments on a number of patients, including Muslims, non-Muslims, Arab, and non-Arab, to monitor the influence of the Glorious Qur'an on them. After listening to the Qur'an, the conclusions, however, proved to be amazing. The Glorious Qur'an had a positive influence on all of them irrespective of their religion or language. Yet, degrees of influence have differed according to some criteria such as language and religion. No wonder, the Glorious Qur'an enjoys this influential characteristic for it is the Word of Allah, Most High.

Tartil[1] of the Glorious Qur'an

Reading the Glorious Qur'an is different from reading other books for it is the Book of Allah, which is characterized by:

> ﴿*(This is) a book, with verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning), further explained in detail, from One who is Wise and Well-acquainted (with all things).*﴾
>
> (Hud: 1)

Accordingly, the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an requires certain inward and outward morals and manners. *Tartil*, however, is one of the outward manners that one should abide by when reading the Glorious Qur'an.

As-Syuti said, "*Tartil* in reciting the Glorious Qur'an is *Sunnah*, for Allah, Most High, says, ﴿*And recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones.*﴾ (Al-Muzzammil: 4)."

Yet, I think it is more proper to regard *Tartil* of the Glorious Qur'an as *Wajib* (obligatory), for the above Qur'anic verse is in the imperative mode. In this connection, Az-Zarkashi said, "*Tartil* is a duty upon every Muslim when reading the Qur'an."[2]

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1. *Tartil*, as an Arabic term, means to read the Qur'an slowly in order to pronounce each sound correctly. (Trans.)
2. *Al-Burhan*, vol. 1, p. 449.

Umm Salamah, Mother of the Believers, described the recitation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as being clear, letter by letter.[1]

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked, "How was the recitation (of the Qur'an) of the Prophet?" He replied, "It was characterized by the prolongation of certain sounds." He then recited, *(In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,)* prolonging the pronunciation of 'Allah,' 'Most Gracious,' and 'Most Merciful'.[2]

A man came to Ibn Mas`ud and said, "I recited the *Mufassal* (*suras*) at night in one *rak`ah*." Ibn Mas`ud said, "This recitation is (too quick) like the recitation of poetry. Verily, there are people who recite the Qur'an, but it does not go beyond their collarbones. It is (a fact with the Qur'an) that it is beneficial only when it settles in the heart and is rooted deeply in it."[3]

In *Al-Muhadhdhab*, it is said that an excessively quick recitation of the Qur'an is abhorred.

Moreover, it is said that reading a small part of the Glorious Qur'an with *Tartil* is better than reading double the amount without *Tartil*.

Tartil of the Glorious Qur'an is recommended for it leads to reflection upon the Glorious Words and has a great influence on the heart. *Tartil* signifies reading the Glorious Qur'an, uttering articulately its letters and pondering on its meanings.

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1. Reported by Abu Dawud.
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari.
3. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Al-Ghazali pointed out the fact that *Tartil* of the Qur'an is not recommended only because it leads to reflection upon the Glorious verses, but for it shows reverence and respect for the Glorious Qur'an besides having great influence on the hearts. By the same token, non-Arab Muslims are recommended to read the Qur'an with *Tartil* although they do not understand the meaning of the Qur'an.

Reciting the Qur'an with a Sweet Voice

Amongst the good manners of reciting the Glorious Qur'an is to read it with a sweet voice and good tone. As the Glorious Qur'an is good in itself, reading it with a sweet voice maintains its beauty, attracts the hearts, and influences the feelings.

As-Suyuti (may Allah have mercy on him) said that reading the Qur'an with a sweet voice is recommended by the *Sunnah*, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Adorn the Qur'an with your voices."*[1]
>
> *"Beautify the Qur'an with your voices since a sweet voice maintains the beauty of the Qur'an."*[2]
>
> *"A sweet voice is the adornment of the Qur'an."*[3]

It is further recommended, according to An-Nawawi, to listen to and ask people with a sweet voice and good intonation to recite the Glorious Qur'an. People can gather to read the Qur'an and listen to each other.[4]

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1. Reported by Ibn Hibban.
2. Reported by Ad-Darami.
3. Reported by Al-Bazzar.
4. An-Nawawi, *Al-Itqan*, vol. 1, pp. 302-303.

Al-Qurtubi's Discussion on the Ways of Reading the Qur'an

In the introduction of his well-known *Tafsir* (exegesis), Imam Al-Qurtubi discussed the ways of reading the Glorious Qur'an and highlighted the legal ruling regarding each way, as follows:

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked, "How was the recitation (of the Qur'an) of the Prophet?" He replied, "It was characterized by the prolongation of certain sounds." He then recited, *(In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,)* prolonging the pronunciation of 'Allah,' 'Most Gracious,' and 'Most Merciful'.[1]

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to stop after reading each verse of the Qur'an. In this way he used to say: *(In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,)* and then stops, and to say: *(Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds,)* and then stops, and to say: (*Most Gracious, Most Merciful,*) *and then stops, and to say: (Master of the Day of Judgment).*[2]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"The best voice of the people in reciting the Qur'an is that of a man who, when reading the Qur'an, you notice his consciousness of Allah."*[3]

Qays ibn `Abbad reported that the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to abhor raising

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1. Reported by Al-Bukhari.
2. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.
3. Al-Haythami, *Az-Zwa'id*, vol. 7, p. 70.

their voices when remembering Allah, Most High. Many scholars have maintained the abhorrence of reading the Glorious Qur'an loudly such as Sa`id ibn Al-Musayib, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, Al-Hasan, Ibn Sirin, An-Nakh`i, Malik ibn Anas, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Once Malik was asked about reciting the Glorious Qur'an loudly in Prayer and he declared his extreme abhorrence of this.

In contrast, other scholars permit reading the Glorious Qur'an loudly. They base their view on the fact that a sweet voice is more influential on and attractive to the hearts. In support of their view, the proponents of this stance quote the following *hadith*s:

On the authority of Al-Bara' ibn `Azib (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Adorn the Qur'an with your voices."*[1]

Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) declared,

> *"He is not one of us (Muslims) who does not try to read the Qur'an with a sweet voice."*[2]

Abu Burda narrated on the authority of Abu Musa that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to Abu Musa,

> *"If you were to see me, as I was listening to your recitation (of the Qur'an) last night (you would have felt delighted). You are in fact endowed with a sweet voice like that of Dawud himself."*

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1. Reported by Abu Dawud and An-Nsa'i.
2. Reported by Muslim.

Thereupon, Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) replied, "If I had known that you were listening to me, I would have read it with an even sweeter voice."[1]

`Abdullah ibn Al-Mughaffal Al-Muzani said, "I saw Allah's Messenger on the day of the Conquest of Makkah, riding his she-camel and reciting *surat* Al-Fat-h. He recited it in a vibrating and pleasant voice."[2]

The above view, however, is maintained by Abu Hanifah, Ash-Shafi'i, Ibn Al-Mubarak, An-Nadr ibn Shmil, Abu Ja`far At-Tabari, Abu Al-Hasan ibn Battal, and Abu Bakr ibn Al-`Arabi.

Al-Qurtubi, all in all, gives preference to the former opinion over the latter.

In this connection, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say,

> *"Allah does not listen to anything, (more approvingly) as He listens to a Prophet reciting loudly the Qur'an with a sweet voice."*[3]

Abu Al-Hasan ibn Battal has confirmed the latter opinion and quoted the following *hadith* in support of his view,

> *"Learn the Qur'an, read it with a sweet voice, and write it down..."*[4]

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1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Reported by Al-Bukhari.
3. Reported by Muslim.
4. As-Syuti, *Al-Jami` Al-Kabir*, No. 12658.

Views Regarding the Recitation of the Qur'an Loudly or Quietly

There are some *hadiths* that recommend reciting the Qur'an loudly, while other *hadiths* give preference to reciting the Glorious Qur'an in a low voice. An example of the first category is the following *hadith*:

> *"Allah does not listen to anything, (more approvingly) as He listens to a Prophet reciting loudly the Qur'an in a sweet voice."*[1]

Yet, an example of the second category is the following *hadith*:

> *"The similitude of a man who recites the Qur'an loudly is that of a man who gives charity overtly, while the similitude of a man who recites the Qur'an in a low voice is that of a man who gives charity covertly."*[2]

In this regard, An-Nawawi said that reading the Glorious Qur'an in a low voice is better than reading loudly in some situations: When one fears insincerity; when reading loudly would interrupt other worshipers; when sleepers may be awakened owing to a loud voice, etc. Reading the Glorious Qur'an loudly is better in other situations for it awakens the hearts, has great influence on the listeners, makes the reader concentrate on reading, etc. The following *hadith* confirms this view: Abu Sa`id reported that once the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was in the mosque when he heard the people reading the Qur'an loudly; thereupon he said,

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1. Reported by Muslim.
2. Reported by Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, and An-Nsa'i.

"As you all invoke and converse with Allah, none of you should harm the others nor raise his voice over theirs."[1]

Abu Hurayrah, moreover, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to read the Qur'an by night in a loud voice for some time and in a low voice in other times.[2]

1. Reported by Abu Dawud.
2. Reported by Abu Dawud.

Pondering over the Meaning of the Qur'an

One of the inward manners that one should abide by when reading the Glorious Qur'an is pondering over the meaning of the Qur'anic words and verses. When reading the Glorious Qur'an, one is recommended to think of the meaning and significance of what he reads. Allah, Most High, has revealed the Glorious Qur'an in order to be reflected upon and understood. In this connection, the Glorious Qur'an says,

﴿*(Here is) a Book which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.*﴾

(Sad: 29)

Furthermore, Allah, Most High, urges people to reflect on the Glorious Qur'an saying,

﴿*Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy.*﴾

(An-Nisa': 82)

﴿*Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them.*﴾

(Muhammad: 24)

In his *Jami` Al-`Ilm*, Ibn `Abd Al-Barr reported on the authority of `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, "There is no good in worship without consciousness, in knowledge without understanding, nor in reading without contemplation."

Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "It is better to read *surat* Az-Zalzalah and Al-Qari`ah with contemplation than to heedlessly read *surat* Al-Baqarah and Al `Imran."[1]

Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "In my opinion, it is better to read the Glorious Qur'an in a month than to read it in fifteen days, to read it in fifteen days is better than to read it in ten days, and to read it in ten days is better than to read it in seven days, as long as I ponder (over the meanings of the verses) and invoke (Allah)."[2]

Apparently, reading the Glorious Qur'an slowly paves the way for contemplation, which is the avowed objective of reading the Glorious Qur'an. The Glorious Qur'an, according to M. S. Ar-Rafi`i, consists of words of light.

Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴿*(This is) a book, with verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning), further explained in detail, from One who is Wise and Well-acquainted (with all things).*﴾

(Hud: 1)

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1. What is meant by Ibn `Abbas is that he preferred attentively reading small *surahs* such as Az-Zalzalah and Al-Qari`ah over heedlessly reading long *surahs* such as Al-Baqarah and Al `Imran. (Trans.)
2. Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf.*

The Glorious Qur'an is further described in a Prophetic *hadith* as follows,

> *"(The Qur'an) comprises endless marvels... Whoever tells depending on it, will be truthful; whoever passes judgment on basis of it, will be just; whoever acts according to it, will be rewarded (by Allah); and whoever calls to it, will be guided to the straight path."*[1]

The Glorious Qur'an is full of signs, wisdom, rules, proofs, instructions, and miracles. Therefore, deep thinking and contemplation in reading the Qur'an is the only way to realize these contents.

If a reciter of the Glorious Qur'an needs to repeat the Qur'anic verses to understand and reflect on them, he is recommended to do so. This was the custom of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and the early Muslims. In this context, Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) reported, "One night, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) led us in the Vigil Prayer, in which he repeated the following Qur'anic verse during the whole Prayer: ﴿ *If Thou dost punish them, they are Thy servants: if Thou dost forgive them, Thou are the Exalted in power, the Wise.* ﴾ (Al-Ma'idah: 118)."[2]

Likewise, Tamim Ad-Dari prayed the whole night repeating the following verse: ﴿ *What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make.* ﴾ (Al-Jathiyah: 21)[3]

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1. Reported by At-Tirmidhi.
2. Reported by An-Nsa'i.
3. Reported by Abu Dawud.

Ibrahim ibn `Alqamah said that, "I prayed beside `Abdullah (ibn Mas`ud) when he recited from the beginning of *surat* Taha until he repeated the following verse thrice: ﴿*Say, 'O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.'*﴾ (Taha: 114)."[1]

Speaking about his mother, `Urwah ibn Az-Zubayr said, "Once, I entered upon Asma' bint Abi Bakr when she was performing Prayer reciting the Qur'anic verse that reads, ﴿*But Allah has been good to us, and has delivered us from the Penalty of the Scorching Wind.*﴾ (At-Tur: 27), then I stayed for a long time, then I went to the market and then returned home while she was still repeating the same verse."[2]

`Amir ibn Qays, similarly, once commenced the Night Prayer with *surat* Ghafir until he reached the verse that reads, ﴿*Warn them of the Day that is (ever) drawing near, when the hearts will (come) right up to the throats to choke (them).*﴾ (Ghafir: 18), and repeated it until dawn."[3]

The righteous successors like Sa`id ibn Jubayr and Ar-Rabi` ibn Khaytham were accustomed to do the same practice. Abu Sulayman Ad-Darani said, "I used to recite and ponder on a single Qur'anic verse in the Night Prayer for four or five days. Yet, if I did not stop reflecting upon that verse, I would not pass on to another verse."[4]

Weeping and Feeling Awe When Reciting the Qur'an

When reading the Glorious Qur'an, one should feel awe and weep. In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah, Most High, says,

1. Reported by Ibn Abi Dawud.
2. Reported by Ahmad.
3. *Fada'il Al-Qur'an*, Reported by Abu `Ubayd.
4. *Fada'il Al-Qur'an*, Reported by Abu `Ubayd.

﴿*Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, verily, thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah.*﴾

(Al-Hashr: 21)

If a person could not weep or feel awe when reading the Glorious Qur'an, he is recommended to exert himself to do so. This is required in case of reading or listening to the Glorious Qur'an.

In this connection, Allah, Most High, says,

﴿*Has not the time arrived for the believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them), and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors.*﴾

(Ail-Hadid: 16)

Commenting on the above glorious verse, Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "After thirteen years of revealing the Glorious Qur'an, Allah, Most High, admonished the believers to feel awe when reading or listening to it, saying, ﴿*Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them).*"

Likewise, Ibn Kathir commented on the same verse, saying, "Allah, Most High, forbade the believers to imitate the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, who altered the book of Allah, sought wealth by means of it, disregarded its laws, and

replaced it with false sayings. Therefore, their hearts grew hard to the extent that they never accepted any admonition."[1]

In this context, the Glorious Qur'an reproaches the People of the Book, saying,

﴾*(But because of their breach of their Covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard: they change the words from their (right) places and forget a good part of the message that was sent them.*﴿

(Al-Ma'idah: 13)

Describing the Glorious Qur'an, Allah, Most High, says,

﴾*Allah has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises.*﴿

(Az-Zumar: 23)

Scholars are distinguished by their awe and weeping when listening to the Glorious Qur'an, as Allah, Most High, says,

﴾*(It is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages. Say: Whether ye believe in it or not, it is true that those who were given knowledge beforehand, when it recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration, and they say: Glory be to our Lord; truly has the promise of our Lord been*

1. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, vol. 4, p. 310.

fulfilled. They fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their (earnest) humility.﴾

(Al-Isra': 106-109)

Moreover, He, Most High, praises a group of Christians who burst into tears when listening to the Glorious Qur'an, saying,

﴿*(And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: they pray: 'Our Lord! We believe; write us down among the witnesses. What cause can we have, not to believe in Allah and the truth, which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous!*﴾

(Al-Ma'idah: 83-84)

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to me, '*Recite (the Qur'an) to me.*' I said, 'O Allah's Messenger, shall I recite (the Qur'an) to you while it has been revealed to you?' He said, '*Yes.*' So, I recited *surat* An-Nisa', but when I recited the verse: ﴿*How (will it be) then when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people,*﴾ he said, '*Enough for the present,*' I looked at him and behold his eyes were overflowing with tears."[1]

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Recite the Glorious Qur'an and weep when reading it. Yet, if you could not weep, you should exert yourself to weep; and if your eyes could not burst into tears, your hearts should weep instead."[2]

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

2. Reported by ibn Majah.

Weeping of the heart means awe and sadness. When reading the Glorious Qur'an, a person should reflect on what it contains of threats, warnings, covenants, etc., and then contemplate on his shortcomings in this regard. Inevitably, he will feel sad and weep. Otherwise, he should exert himself to do so.

Actions of the Heart That Should Precede Contemplation

In his *Ihya'*, Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali pointed out the actions of the heart that should exist before contemplation as follows:

1- Grasping the glory and superiority of the words: A reciter of the Glorious Qur'an should understand and grasp the glory of what he reads. He should ponder on Allah's favor upon His servants when revealing understandable revelation to them.

2- Revering the Speaker: When reading the Glorious Qur'an, one should be mindful of the fact that what he reads is not the speech of a human; rather it is Allah's. Keeping this fact in mind, `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl used to fall unconscious when opening the Mus-haf (the Glorious Book), saying, "It is the Speech of my Lord, it is the Speech of my Lord." One, therefore, should ponder over the glory of the Speaker and His Attributes, Power, Throne, Creation, etc.

3- Consciousness of the heart: When reading the Glorious Qur'an, one should not be distracted from what he reads. In this light, the Qur'anic verse that reads, ﴿*O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might,*﴾[1] is explained as a command to read the book attentively. Some early Muslims, therefore, used to repeat the verse from which his heart is distracted in order to

1. *Surat* Maryam: 12.

read it attentively once more. Consciousness of the heart is the fruit of reverence for the Speaker of the Qur'an, i.e., Allah.

Obstacles That Hinder One's Understanding of the Qur'an

The Person who wishes to ponder over the Glorious Qur'an should keep himself free of the obstacles that hinder his understanding of it. These obstacles, according Imam Al-Ghazali, are four:

1- Concerning oneself with the pronunciation of words rather than reflecting upon their meanings: The accursed Satan tries to trap reciters of the Glorious Qur'an thereby.

2- Blind imitation of and enthusiasm to a certain school of thought or belief: One who blindly imitates a certain school or a theory is confined to that school or theory as long as he does not free himself from blind enthusiasm. In this way, Satan could ensnare narrow-minded people and insinuate evil ideas in order to keep them far from the right way.

3- Committing sins and following vain desires: Sins darken the hearts and hinder the light of the Glorious Qur'an from illuminating them. The more vain desires one follows, the more difficulties in understanding the Qur'an he will face. In more than one verse, the Glorious Qur'an confirms this fact. For example, it says,

﴿*(This is) to be observed and commemorated by every devotee turning (to Allah).*﴾

(Qaf: 8)

﴾ *But only those receive admonition who turn (to Allah).* ﴿

(Ghafir: 13)

﴾ *It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition.* ﴿

(Ar-Ra`d: 19)

4- Reading superficial commentary of the Glorious Qur'an and believing that no one should explain the Qur'an except in the light of what is narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, and others, and that using one's mind in explaining the Qur'an is a major sin: In this way, such people will not use their minds to contemplate or understand the meaning of the Glorious Qur'an.

Particularity

Amongst the inward morals of reciting the Qur'an is what Imam Al-Ghazali called *Takhsis* (particularity), which means that, when reading the Glorious Qur'an, one should regard it as addressing him in particular. In doing so, one should consider every Qur'anic glad tiding, warning, admonition, story, etc., to be meant for him. The Glorious Qur'an says,

﴾ *There is, in their stories, instruction for men endued with understanding. It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it, a detailed exposition of all things, and a guide and a mercy to any such as believe.* ﴿

(Yusuf: 111)

The Glorious Qur'an addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying,

﴾*All that We relate to thee of the stories of the messengers - with it We make firm thy heart: in them there cometh to thee the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe.*﴿

(Hud: 112)

When reading the above Qur'anic verse, a reciter of the Glorious Qur'an should admit that Qur'anic stories are meant to strengthen his own heart, although the address in the verse is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). No wonder, the Glorious Qur'an is decreed by its Revealer, Most High, to be the remedy, guidance, and mercy for all people. Allah, Most High, says,

﴾*Rehearse Allah's favours on you, and the fact that He sent down to you the book and wisdom, for your instruction.*﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 231)

﴾*We have revealed for you (O men!) a book in which is a message for you: will ye not then understand.*﴿

(Al-Anbiya': 10)

﴾*(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Scriptures and We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them.*﴿

(An-Nahl: 44)

﴾*Thus does Allah set forth for men their lessons by similitudes.*﴿

(Muhammad: 3)

﴾*And follow the Best of (the courses) revealed to you from your Lord.*﴿

(Az-Zumar: 55)

﴾*These are clear evidences to men, and a Guidance and Mercy to those of assured Faith.*﴿

(Al-Jathiyah: 20)

﴾*Here is a plain statement to men, a guidance and instruction to those who fear Allah.*﴿

(Al `Imran: 138)

Yet, even when the address in the Glorious Qur'an is of a general nature, the individual, in origin, is included in this address. In this context, the Glorious Qur'an eloquently states what the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is ordered to say to his people,

﴾*This Qur'an hath been revealed to me by inspiration, that I may warn you and all whom it reaches.*﴿

(Al-An`am: 19)

Moreover, Muhammad ibn Ka`b Al-Qarazi said, "Whoever reads the Glorious Qur'an, will be as if he is addressed by Allah."

Some scholars, furthermore, said, "This Qur'an is Allah's messages to us; so we should reflect upon, abide by, and ponder on it."

Malik ibn Dinar used to call the people of the Qur'an, saying, "O people of the Qur'an, what has the Qur'an implanted in your hearts? The Qur'an is the spring of the believer, similarly as rain is the spring of the earth."

Qatadah said that no one recites the Glorious Qur'an but either wins or loses. The Glorious Qur'an disclosed this fact, saying,

﴾*We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss.*﴿

(Al-Isra': 82)

Influence

Amongst the inward morals of reciting the Glorious Qur'an is what Imam Al-Ghazali called "Influence", meaning that a person's heart should be influenced when reciting the Glorious Qur'an. This influence varies according to the meaning of the verses one reads, i.e., one's heart should be overwhelmed with fear, hope, or sadness in response to the subject-matter of the verses he reads. In this way, when one reads the following Qur'anic verse, ﴾*But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe, and do right, who, in fine, are ready to receive true guidance,*﴿(1) he should consider the four prerequisites of gaining Allah's forgiveness, which are mentioned in the verse.

Likewise, when reading *surat* Al-`Asr - which reads, ﴾*By (the token of) time (through the ages)! Verily, Man is in loss. Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.*﴿ - one should reflect upon these four conditions of exemption of loss.

Moreover, when reading the Qur'anic verse that reads: ﴾*The mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good,*﴿(2) should know that good-doing includes all the above-mentioned conditions of success and gaining Allah's forgiveness.

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1. *Surat* Taha: 82.
2. *Surat* Al-`Araf: 56.

Wuhayb ibn Al-Ward said, "We have contemplated the Prophetic *hadith*s and admonitions and discovered that nothing is more impressive nor makes the hearts more tender than reciting, understanding, and pondering on the Glorious Qur'an.

The influence of a believer's heart, when reading the Glorious Qur'an, varies according to the context of the verses he reads. For instance, his heart should be overwhelmed with fear when he reads verses dealing with threats and punishment. When reading verses speaking about Allah's mercy and forgiveness, his heart feels great delight. When reading verses, explaining Allah's Names and Attributes, his heart is filled with the Glory and Majesty of Allah.

We recall, in this connection, what is reported on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud who said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to me, '*Recite (the Qur'an) to me.*' I said, 'O Allah's Messenger, shall I recite (the Qur'an) to you while it has been revealed to you?' He said, '*Yes.*' So, I recited *surat* An-Nisa', but when I recited the verse: ﴿*How (will it be) then when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people,*﴾ he said, '*Enough for the present,*' I looked at him and beheld his eyes were overflowing with tears."[1]

It is no wonder that some righteous men fell dead or unconscious when reciting or listening to some Qur'anic verses dealing with the threats and torment in the Hereafter.

If a reciter of the Glorious Qur'an reads the Qur'anic verse that reads: ﴿*Our Lord! In Thee do we trust, and to Thee do we turn*

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

in repentance: to Thee is (our) final Goal, ﴾[1] and the verse that says: ﴿ *We shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us,* ﴾[2] and does not place his trust in Allah and observe patience, he should exert himself to abide by these virtues. Otherwise, he will incur curses upon himself when reading Qur'anic verses like the following:

﴿ *Behold the curse of Allah is on those who do wrong.* ﴾

(Hud: 18)

﴿ *Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not.* ﴾

(As-Saff: 3)

﴿ *Yet they heed not and they turn away.* ﴾

(Al-Anbiya': 1)

﴿ *Therefore shun those who turn away from Our Message and desire nothing but the life of this world.* ﴾

(An-Najm: 29)

﴿ *Those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.* ﴾

(Al-Hujurat: 11)

Likewise, such a man will be included in the description of the following Qur'anic verses:

﴿ *And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but (see therein their own) desires.* ﴾

(Al-Baqarah: 78)

﴿ *And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them.* ﴾

(Yusuf: 105)

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1. *Surat* Al-Mumtahinah: 4.
2. *Surat* Ibrahim: 12.

Therefore, it is said that one who does not abide by the morals of the Glorious Qur'an would be called by Allah: "What do you want from My Words as long as you ignore Me?"

The similitude of one who reads the Qur'an and insists on disobeying Allah is as a man who, having received a letter from his king bidding him to do something, insists on disobeying his king's order while he continues to read his letter.

One who abstains from doing good is referred to by the Qur'anic verse that reads,

> ﴿*But they threw it away behind their backs, and purchased with it some miserable gain and vile was the bargain they made.*﴾

(Al `Imran: 187)

In this context, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Recite (and study) the Qur'an as long as your hearts are in agreement as to its meanings, but if you have differences as regards its meaning, stop reading it then."*[1]

Allah, Most High, highlights the characteristics of His devout believers, saying,

> ﴿*When they (believers) hear His Signs (verses) rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord.*﴾

(Al-Anfal: 2)

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The Highest Degree of Reading the Glorious Qur'an

In his well-reputed *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, Imam Al-Ghazali pointed out that a reciter of the Glorious Qur'an attains the highest degree of reading the Glorious Qur'an in case he imagines that he hears it from Allah, Most High, Himself. Degrees of reading the Glorious Qur'an, however, are three:

a) Reading the Glorious Qur'an while imagining that Allah, Most High, hears the recitation of it: In this case, a reciter of the Qur'an imagines that he reads it before Allah, Most High, while He looks at and hears him. The state of such a person is one who calls upon and invokes Allah, Most High.

b) Reading the Qur'an while imagining that Allah, Most High, sees and converses with him: In this case, a reciter of the Qur'an would listen to, glorify, and understand Whom he imagines to be conversing with him.

c) Reading the Qur'an while imagining that Allah, Most High, recites it Himself: In this case, a reciter of the Glorious Qur'an does not see himself or his recitation, and sees that Allah is the One Who says it Himself.

The last is the degree of *Al-Muqarrabun* (the most favorite people of Allah); the second is the degree of *As-hab Al-Yamin* (the Companions of the Right Hand); the other is the degree of the heedless people.

Commenting on the highest degree, Ja`far ibn Muhammad As-Sadiq (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "By Allah! Allah appears for His creation in His Words, but they see not."

Once, he fell unconscious while praying and people asked him afterwards about the reason for this, and he declared, "I kept repeating a Qur'anic verse in my heart until I heard it from its Speaker (Most High) and, therefore, I could not keep conscious because of His Might."

In this connection, a righteous man said, "I have not tasted the sweetness of reading the Glorious Qur'an until I read it imagining that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited it before his Companions; then I read it imagining that Gabriel (peace be upon him) recited it before the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him); then I was gifted with the highest degree, i.e., hearing it from its Speaker, whereupon I tasted the unparalleled sweetness of reading it to the extent that I could not keep away from it."

By the same token, `Uthman and Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "When hearts are purified, they will never become bored with reading the Qur'an." Thabit Al-Banani, likewise, said, "I insisted on reading the Qur'an for twenty years, and then I enjoyed reading it for other twenty years."

Whoever sees the Speaker of the Qur'an other than any one else, will be submitting to Allah's saying,

> ﴿*Hasten ye then (at once) to Allah: I am from Him a Warner to you, clear and open, And make not another an object of worship with Allah...*﴾

(Adh-Dhariyat: 50-51)

Positive Response

As one reads and ponders on the Glorious Qur'an, one must respond positively to what he reads. Meaning should be reflected upon and grasped, and then one should react accordingly. Should he read Qur'anic verses speaking about Allah's mercy, he must ask Allah to forgive and bestow His mercy upon him. In case he reads verses dealing with torment or punishment, he should seek refuge in Allah from it. When reading verses that shed light on Allah's Glory, Names, and Attributes, he should glorify and praise Him, Most High.

In this context, we recall the narration of Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him) who reported, "I prayed with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) one night and he started reciting *surat* Al-Baqarah. I thought that he would bow at the end of one hundred verses, but he proceeded; I then thought that he would perhaps recite the whole (*surah*) in a *rak`ah*, but he proceeded and I thought he would perhaps bow on completing (this *surah*). He then started reading *surat* An-Nisa', and recited it; he then started Al `Imran and recited it. He recited leisurely. And when he recited the verses which referred to the Glory of Allah, he glorified (by saying *Subhana Allah* - Glory be to my Lord, the Great), and when he recited the verses which tell (how the Lord) is to be begged, he (the Prophet) would then beg (from Him), and when he recited the verses dealing with seeking refuge in Allah, he sought refuge in Him..."[1]

`Awf ibn Malik, likewise, reported, "One night, I prayed with the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he recited *surat*

1. Reported by Muslim.

Al-Baqarah. He beseeched Allah's Mercy whenever he read verses speaking about Allah's Mercy, and sought refuge in Allah whenever he read verses dealing with punishment or torment."[1]

Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported that whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) read: ﴿*Glorify the Name of thy Guardian Lord, Most High,*﴾[2] he used to say, "Glory be to my Lord, Most High."[3]

In his *Al-Burhan fi `Ulum Al-Qur'an*, Imam Az-Zarkashi said that learning the Glorious Qur'an is an unparalleled gift, for it is the Divine, endless miracle of Islam, which was revealed to the seal of the Prophets (peace be upon them all). It is the Word of Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Therefore, one who is gifted with learning the Qur'an should believe that he is greatly favored by Allah, Most High. Therefore, it is his duty to make the Glorious Qur'an a proof on his behalf through abiding by its instructions which will be manifested in doing good and steering clear of all forms of evil. Good recitation of the Glorious Qur'an, in fact, helps man fulfill this duty. In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah, Most High, addresses His Prophet (peace be upon him), saying,

﴿*And recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones.*﴾

(Al-Muzzammil: 4)

﴿*(It is) a Qur'an, which We have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages.*﴾

(Al-Isra': 106)

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1. Reported by Abu Dawud.
2. *Surat* Al-A`la: 1.
3. Reported by Ahmad and Abu Dawud.

A reciter of the Glorious Qur'an should reflect upon what he reads, and grasp the meaning of each verse to the extent that he does not pass from one verse to another verse until he becomes himself well-acquainted with its meaning. When he reads, for example, the call: ﴿*O you who believe,*﴾ he should focus his attention on it and ponder on what comes after it of commands, prohibitions, admonitions, etc. On reading the above call, some righteous men used to say: Here I am, O Lord, at your service. Thus, if he reads a verse containing a command that he did not carry out in the past, he should ask Allah for forgiveness. Should he, for instance, read the verse that reads: ﴿*O ye who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance,*﴾[1] he has to think of his sins and consequently ask Allah to forgive him, and to redeem himself of others' dues if there are any. In this way, he will be regarded as a believer who listens to and obeys His Lord.

If one reads a Qur'anic verse and does not know its meaning, he is recommended to memorize it until he asks a scholar about its meaning. If he reads Qur'anic verses dealing with the destruction of previous nations, he should ponder on their affair and express his gratitude to Allah for His favor on this *Ummah*. If he reads a command or prohibition, he should intend to abide by it. If he reads *Mutashabihat*[2] verses, he has to confirm his belief in them in correspondence to Allah's command in the verse that reads,

> ﴿*He it is who has sent down to thee the book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they*

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1. *Surat* At-Tahrim: 8.
2. According to the Qur'an, the Qur'anic verses are divided into *Muhkam* (clear in meaning) and *Mutashabihat* (unclear verses). (Trans.)

are the foundation of the book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: We believe in the book; the whole of it is from our Lord: and none will grasp the message except men of understanding. ﴾

(Al `Imran: 7)

Reading the Whole Qur'an

As-Suyuti said, "It is recommended to constantly read the Glorious Qur'an. Allah, Most High, says,

﴿*... they rehearse the Signs (verses) of Allah all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration.* ﴾

(Al `Imran: 113)

Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"There is no envy except in two: one who, having been given (knowledge of) the Qur'an by Allah, recites it during the night and day (and also acts upon it)..."[1]

Early Muslims differed in the periods in which they used to take to finish reading the whole Qur'an. Some of them used to read the whole Qur'an eight times per day."

However, I think it is impossible to finish reading the whole Glorious Qur'an eight times in a day for the fastest reading of

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

the Qur'an takes approximately more than sixty hours at least. Therefore, I doubt the authenticity of the above narration of As-Suyuti and the soundness of such fast reading.

As-Suyuti continued, saying, "Others used to recite the whole Qur'an four times per day; others used to recite it three times; others used to recite it twice; and others used to recite it once.

`A'ishah, Mother of the Believers, did not approve of such fast reading of the Glorious Qur'an. Muslim ibn Mikhraq reported, "I asked `A'ishah about some men who recite the whole Qur'an two or three times per night. Thereupon, she declared, 'They recite it, yet they do not recite it (properly). Once, I prayed with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in a night and he recited *surat* Al-Baqarah, *surat* Al `Imran, and *surat* An-Nisa'. He left no verse telling about glad tidings without invocation and hope (that he would be favored by Allah), nor a verse dealing with threats, without making supplication and seeking refuge (in Allah from this)."(1)

Other people used to finish the recitation of the whole Qur'an in two days. Others used to finish it in three days, which is passable. A group of scholars dislike finishing the recitation of the whole Qur'an in less than three days, for `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported, "He will not understand, who reads the Qur'an in less than three days."(2)

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) reported, "Don't read the whole Qur'an in less than three (days)."(3)

1. Reported by Abu Dawud.

2. Reported by Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi.

3. Reported by Abu Dawud.

Abu `Ubayd reported that Mu`adh ibn Jabal disliked reading the whole Qur'an in less than three days. Likewise, Ahmad and Abu `Ubayd reported that Sa`id ibn Al-Mundhir said, "I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! Should I read the whole Qur'an in three (days)?' '*Yes, if you can,*' he replied."

Other people used to read the whole Qur'an in four, five, six, or seven days. Most of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) used to recite it in seven days, which is a moderate span of time in this aspect.

`Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported, "My father married me to a lady of a noble family, and often used to ask my wife about me, and she used to reply, 'What a wonderful man he is! He never comes to my bed, nor has he approached me since he married me.' When this state continued for a long period of time, my father told the story to the Prophet who said to my father, '*Let me meet him.*' Then I met him and he asked me, '*How do you fast?*' I replied, 'I fast daily.' He asked, '*How long does it take you to finish the recitation of the whole Qur'an?*' I replied, 'I finish it every night.' On that he said, '*Fast for three days every month and recite the Qur'an (and finish it) in one month.*' I said, 'But I have power to do more than that.' He said, '*Then fast for three days per week.*' I said, 'I have the power to do more than that.' He said, '*Therefore, fast the most superior type of fasting, (that is, the fasting of Prophet) Dawud (who) used to fast every alternate day; and finish the recitation of the whole Qur'an in seven days.*'"[1]

Other people used to finish the recitation of the whole Qur'an in eight, ten, thirty, or sixty days. Abu Dawud reported that

1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Makhul said that the powerful Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to finish the recitation of the whole Qur'an in seven, thirty, or sixty days, or more.

In his *Bustan* (the Garden), Abu Al-Layth said that one should finish the recitation of the Qur'an twice per year, if he could do no more than this.

Al-Hasan ibn Zayd reported that Abu Hanifah said, "Whoever reads the whole Qur'an twice every year, has fulfilled its right, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) read the whole Qur'an twice before Gabriel, in the year of his death."

Other scholars hold the opinion that it is disliked to read the whole Qur'an in more than forty days without a justifiable reason. `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with them both) asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), "How long should I take to finish the recitation of the whole Qur'an?" "*In forty days,*" he (peace be upon him) replied.

In his *Al-Adhkar*, Imam An-Nawawi said, "The preferable stance is that this issue differs according to the circumstances of every person. Accordingly, if one is accustomed to reflecting upon and delving deeply into the meanings of the Qur'anic verses, he is recommended to read what helps him in this regard. If he is concerned with public or official services, he is recommended to read what does not hinder his job. If he is not interested in such matters, he should read as much as he can, provided that there is no boredom, heedlessness, nor incorrect recitation.

Listening to the Glorious Qur'an

Like the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an, listening to it is an act of worship. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) himself listened to his Companions' recitation of the Glorious Qur'an.

Abu Burda narrated on the authority of Abu Musa that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to Abu Musa,

> *"If you were to see me, as I was listening to your recitation (of the Qur'an) last night (you would have felt delighted). You are in fact endowed with a sweet voice like that of Dawud himself."*

Thereupon, Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) replied, "If I had known that you were listening to me, I would have read it with an even sweeter voice."[1]

One night, the Prophet (peace be upon him) along with Abu Bakr and `Umar listened to the recitation of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and they remained there for a long time. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commented,

> *"Whoever wishes to recite the Glorious Qur'an with a tender sound, should read it in accordance with the recitation of Ibn Umm `Abd (i.e., `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud)."*[2]

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1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Reported by Ahmad and An-Nsa'i.

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to me, '*Recite (the Qur'an) to me.*' I said, 'O Allah's Messenger, shall I recite (the Qur'an) to you while it has been revealed to you?' He said, '*Yes.*' So, I recited *surat* An-Nisa', but when I recited the verse: ﴿*How (will it be) then when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people,*﴾ he said, '*Enough for the present,*' I looked at him and behold his eyes were overflowing with tears."[1]

`A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "One night I came late to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) from the mosque. He asked me, '*Where have you been?*' 'I have been listening to a recitation of one of your Companions, whose recitation was unprecedented,' I replied. Then, we went and listened to him, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *'He is Salim, the slave of Abu Hudhayfah. Praise be to Allah Who has decreed the like of this man to be amongst my Ummah.'*"[2]

In our time, the means of listening to the Glorious Qur'an are numerous and worldwide such as cassette tapes, Radio, T.V., multi-media, etc. Some people may ask about the legal ruling regarding touching the tapes of the Qur'an: Should one be pure to touch them like the *Mus-haf* ? I think it is better to respect such tapes as long as one knows that they contain the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an.

Ethics of Listening to the Glorious Qur'an

There are some morals that one should abide by when listening to the Glorious Qur'an. They are as follows:

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1. Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Reported by ibn Majah.

1- Focusing one's attention on what he is listening to: On listening to the Glorious Qur'an, one should keep silent and pay great attention to the recitation. Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴿*When the Qur'an is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that ye may receive mercy.*﴾
>
> (Al-A`raf: 204)

This state leads to reflection upon the meanings of the verses of the Glorious Qur'an. The jinn, according to the Qur'an, listened attentively to the recitation of the Qur'an by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah, Most High, says,

> ﴿*Behold, We turned towards thee a company of Jinns (quietly) listening to the Qur'an: when they stood in the presence thereof, they said, 'Listen in silence!' When the (reading) was finished, they returned to their people, to warn (them of their sins). They said, 'O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Musa, confirming what came before it: it guides (men) to the Truth and to a Straight Path. O our people, hearken to the one who invites (you) to Allah, and believe in him: He will forgive you your faults, and deliver you from a Penalty Grievous.*﴾
>
> (Al-Ahqaf: 29-31)

2- Reflection, Influence, and Positive Response: What is mentioned regarding the ethics pertaining to the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an also applies to listening to it. When listening to the Glorious Qur'an, one should reflect upon the Qur'anic verses he is listening to; his heart should be influenced thereby; and he should react positively. In this context, Allah, Most High, describes the true believers, saying,

﴾*Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Signs (verses) rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord.*﴿

(Al-Anfal: 2)

﴾*Those who, when they are admonished with the Signs (verses) of their Lord, droop not down at them as if they were deaf or blind.*﴿

(Al-Furqan: 73)

The State of the Believers When Listening to the Qur'an

The Glorious Qur'an commends those people who listen attentively to it and act accordingly. Knowledgeable men from the People of the Book are described by the Glorious Qur'an as,

﴾*(It is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that thou mightest recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages. Say: Whether ye believe in it or not, it is true that those who were given knowledge beforehand, when it recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration. And they say: Glory be to our Lord. Truly has the promise of our Lord been fulfilled. They fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their (earnest) humility.*﴿

(Al-Isra': 106-109)

Moreover, the Glorious Qur'an speaks about a group of Christians who embraced Islam, saying,

﴾*And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears,*

for they recognize the truth: they pray: 'Our Lord! We believe; write us down among the witnesses. What cause can we have not to believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous. And for their prayer hath Allah rewarded them with Gardens, with rivers flowing underneath - their eternal home. Such is the recompense of those who do good.﴾

(Al-Ma'idah: 83-85)

Some People Reject the Qur'an

Some people turn their backs on the Glorious Qur'an, and even refuse to listen to it because of their fear of being influenced thereby. By the same token, they hinder others from listening to the Glorious Qur'an. In this connection, the Glorious Qur'an describes the unbelievers, saying,

﴿*The unbelievers say: 'Listen not to this Qur'an, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that ye may gain the upper hand.'*﴾

(Fussilat: 26)

Some People Heedlessly Listen to the Qur'an

Some people listen to the Glorious Qur'an while their hearts are blocked and their ears are deafened. Their arrogance and stubbornness hinder them from listening to and understanding the Glorious Qur'an. In more than one verse, the Glorious Qur'an refers to such people and highlights their traits. For example, it says,

﴿*When thou dost recite the Qur'an, We put, between thee and those who believe not in the Hereafter, a veil invisible.*

And We put covering over their hearts (and minds) lest they should understand the Qur'an, and deafness into their ears: when thou dost commemorate thy Lord and Him alone in the Qur'an, they turn on their backs, fleeing (from the truth). We know best why it is they listen, when they listen to thee; and when they meet in private conference, behold, the wicked say: Ye follow none other than a man bewitched. ﴾

(Al-Isra': 45-47)

﴿ *Of them there are some who (pretend to) listen to thee; but We have thrown veils on their hearts, so they understand it not, and deafness in their ears; if they saw every one of the Signs, not they will believe in them; insomuch that when they come to thee, they (but) dispute with thee; the unbelievers say: These are nothing but tales of the ancients.* ﴾

(Al-An`am: 25)

﴿ *Woe to each sinful dealer in Falsehoods. He hears the Signs of Allah rehearsed to him, yet is obstinate and lofty, as if he had not heard them: then announce to him a Penalty Grievous. And when he learns something of Our Signs, he takes them in jest: for such there will be a humiliating penalty.* ﴾

(Al-Jathiyah: 7-9)

The Glorious Qur'an, therefore, regards such people as not hearing the Qur'an although they hear it. The Glorious Qur'an says,

﴿ *Ha Mim. A revelation from (Allah), Most Gracious, Most Merciful, a Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Qur'an in Arabic, for people who understand, giving good news and admonition: yet most of them turn*

away, and so they hear not. They say: Our hearts are under veils, (concealed) from that to which thou dost invite us, and in our ears is a deafness, and between us and thee is a screen: so do thou (what thou wilt); for us, we shall do (what we will!). ﴿

(Fussilat: 1-5)

If such people hear the Qur'an, they will not understand it. By doing so, they will be like animals, which have no minds, or even worse. Describing such people, Allah, Most High, says,

﴾ *For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb, those who understand not. If Allah had found in them any good, He would indeed have made them listen: (as it is), if He had made them listen, they would but have turned back and declined (Faith).* ﴿

(Al-Anfal: 22-23)

The Glorious Qur'an refers to some people who used to listen to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and when they left him they asked knowledgeable people: what had he (the Prophet) said? The reason behind this was that those people, although they heard the sounds, were heedless and unaware of their meaning. The Glorious Qur'an says,

﴾ *And among them are men who listen to thee, but in the end, when they go out from thee, they say to those who have received knowledge, 'What is it he said just then?' Such are men whose hearts Allah has sealed, and who follow their own lusts.* ﴿

(Muhammad: 16)

Arrogance, envy, adherence to vain desires, narrow-mindedness, and blind imitation, which are the characteristics of such

people, hinder them from listening to and understanding the Glorious Qur'an. These traits nullify the roles of their minds, hearts, ears, and eyes. Allah, Most High, says,

﴾*They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning).*﴿

(Al-A`raf: 179)

﴾*And We had firmly established them in (prosperity and) power which We have not given to you (ye Quraysh!) And We had endowed them with (faculties of) hearing, seeing, heart and intellect: but of no profit to them were their (faculties of) hearing, sight, and heart and intellect, when they went on rejecting the Signs of Allah; and they were (completely) encircled by that which they used to mock at!*﴿

(Al-Ahqaf: 26)

﴾*As to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe. Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).*﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 6-7)

Such people hear with their ears, not with their hearts and minds. Depicting them, the Glorious Qur'an says,

﴾*Nor be like those who say, 'We hear,' but listen not. For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb, those who understand not. If Allah had found in them any good, He would indeed have made them listen: (as it*

is), if He had made them listen, they would but have turned back and declined (Faith). ﴾

(Al-Anfal: 21-23)

Some People Listen to the Qur'an and Alter its Meaning

The Glorious Qur'an refers to some people who listen to it and intentionally try to distort and alter its meaning. In this context, the Glorious Qur'an describes the Jews, saying,

﴿ *Can ye (O ye men of Faith) entertain the hope that they will believe in you? - seeing that a party of them heard the Word of Allah, and perverted it knowingly after they understood it. Behold! When they meet the men of Faith, they say: 'We believe,' but when they meet each other in private, they say: 'Shall you tell them what Allah hath revealed to you, that they may engage you in argument about it before your Lord?' - do ye not understand (their aim)? Know they not that Allah knoweth what they conceal and what they reveal?* ﴾

(Al-Baqarah: 75-77)

The true believers, on the contrary, listen to the Glorious Qur'an with their ears, minds, and hearts. The Glorious Qur'an describes them, saying,

﴿ *Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it: those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones endued with understanding.* ﴾

(Az-Zumar: 18)

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How to Approach the Qur'an discusses the merits, significance and requirements of reciting, memorizing, and contemplating the Glorious Qur'an. As the endless miracle of Allah, the Qur'an deserves special appreciation from all Muslims so that they might achieve success in both this world and the world to come. Having memorized the Qur'an as a child, the author draws upon personal experience as well as deep study in his discussion of the proper way to learn and deal with the Qur'an. *How to Approach the Qur'an* is necessary for every Muslim who hopes to attain the characteristics and morals of the people of the Glorious Qur'an.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi is a well-known Muslim scholar. He was born in Egypt and graduated from the Faculty of Usul ad-Din (Theology), Al-Azhar University, in 1953. He obtained a teacher's certificate in 1954 and a Ph.D in 1973. He was a member in the Supervision of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Endowments), the founder and dean of the Islamic Department at the Faculties of Shari`ah (Islamic Law) and Education in Qatar, and the chief of the World Center for Sunnah and Sirah. He was appointed as a chairman to the Islamic scientific councils of Algerian universities and institutions. He is one of the great scholars of the sunnah in the present age. Prof. Yusuf al-Qaradawi has written about 50 books. They have enjoyed widespread acceptance all over the world and have been translated into several languages. He is a member of several scientific and religious organizations, such as the Academy of Fiqh, the World Muslim League in Mecca, the Royal Academy for Islamic Culture and Research in Jordan, and the Islamic Studies Center at Oxford. He is one of the advocates of Islamic moderation which strikes a balance between fundamentalism and modernization. He grew up among the mother Islamic movement. Among his teachers were Imam Hasan al-Banna, Sheikh al-Bahiyy al-Khuli and Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali.

Al-Falah is an institution devoted to developing a better understanding of Islam among all the people of the world, Muslim and non-Muslim. Of all religions, Islam is the most maligned and misunderstood in the West. Though Oriental Studies have long been established in European and American universities, *real* Islam has seldom been presented to the world. Our aim is to clear the way for a fair appraisal of the fastest-growing religion in the world.

